



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

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TO : Guy Davenport

FROM : Larry Beerkircher,
Pelagic Observer Program

SUBJECT: Fourth quarter (2007) observer coverage summary.

The Pelagic Observer Program (POP) achieved an 8.6% overall coverage rate for the fourth quarter period of 2007 (October 1 to December 31). Selection letters notifying permit holders of observer coverage were sent by certified mail service (return receipt) on September 15, 2007 to 31 vessels who were selected based on fishing activity in the northwestern Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The POP had the responsibility of the regular 8% coverage requirement in the Northwest Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. During this quarter the POP was not involved in any cooperative research projects or enhanced coverage.

Of special note, there was one (1) vessel (Bookie) selected for coverage for Quarter 3 (2007) but whose observed fishing trip did not return to the dock until after the end of the Quarter. For the purposes of this quarterly report, information collected during vessel hauls on or after October 1 through December 31, such as days at-sea, animals caught, incidental take, etc., will be included in this summary. Overall during this quarter, observers spent 237 days at sea on 20 fishing vessels, which resulted in 153 hauls observed and a coverage rate of 8.6%. During the 20 observed trips (Table 1), set effort occurred in the geographical areas of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), the Florida East Coast (FEC), the South Atlantic Bight (SAB), the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB), and the Northeast Distant (NED).

During the pelagic longline trips covered by observers, a total of 134,036 hooks were fished. The total catch observed consisted of 5,962 fish representing 40 species of teleosts and elasmobranchs. The catch data was comprised of 1,709 swordfish, 305 bigeye tuna, 794 yellowfin tuna, 76 bluefin tuna, 383 albacore tuna, 93 other tuna species, 66 dolphin fish (mahi), 16 wahoo, 110 billfish species, 4152 other finfish (escolar,



lancetfish, etc.), 245 skates/rays, 0 small coastal sharks, 290 large coastal sharks, and 1,252 pelagic sharks. During the quarter, observers also recorded incidental takes of protected species (Table 2) which included 30 sea turtles (24-leatherback-alive; 6-loggerheads-alive), in addition to 5 marine mammals (3-pilot whales-alive; 1-Risso's dolphin-alive; 1-bottlenose dolphin-alive). No seabirds were observed captured this quarter, further, the POP recorded no sawfish catches during the quarter; this species is not likely to occur in the pelagic environment.

During the quarter, the POP did not place observers on 13 of 29 selected vessels (45%, Table 3); thus reducing the target coverage of the POP by 79 sets. There was one selected vessel listed in Table 4 as not being covered due to no observer being available; this reduced the POP's coverage opportunities by a minimum of 4 sets. Seven vessels did not take observers due to either a lack of a safety decal, lack of bunk/life raft space, or non-communication with the POP office (reducing coverage by 45 sets). There were two vessels where the POP was unsuccessful at return receipt of a selection letter, and the remainder (3 vessels) did not conduct pelagic longline fishing operations during the quarter. The percent of "non-compliant" vessels (fishing, but not in compliance with observer notification and safety regulations) out of the total selection list for Quarter 4, 2007 was 24%. This ends what appeared to be a trend (29% in Q4 2006, 25% in Q1 2007, 22.7% in Q2 2007, and 9.5% in Q3 2007) in non-compliance figures. The POP intends to continue, and expand, compliance enforcement activities in future quarters, as allowed by conflicting time demands of special projects, etc.

In keeping with the BO reporting requirements from the POP office, observers filled out the turtle handling and release gear forms on all of the 20 third quarter covered vessels. Of the vessels selected and observed in Quarter 4, 95% of the vessels had the equipment needed for removing gear from turtles in the water (at least 3 of 4 items aboard), and 95% had most of the equipment for removing gear if the turtle is boated (6 or more items aboard). Additionally, 58% of the observed vessels also had the turtle tether aboard, which is voluntary at this time. A PDF document of the observer turtle gear forms will be posted on a secure site of the POP website. Finally, the cumulative number of unique vessels observed since the effective date of the sea turtle conservation regulations (July, 2004), now stands at 91 vessels covered (Table 4).

Attachments:

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4.

cc: The POP office files; Gregg Houghaboom, NOAA-Fisheries
SERO/OLE liaison.

Table 1: Regular coverage (8%) of the longline fleet. Number of vessels observed, areas of fishing activity, total hauls observed, and total days at-sea conducted by the SEFSC Miami Laboratory POP from October 1 to December 31, 2007.

Vessel Name	Trip Number	Area	Total Hauls	Total Sea Days
1026595 WHITE WATER	J02068	MAB	15	19
1029712 KENNY BOY	B05003	GOM	5	9
1094947 VICTORIA	T02037	GOM	6	9
539456 BOOKIE	A02028	MAB	2	2
596805 MARY ANN	K04005	MAB	8	11
597421 MONICA	W02009	MAB	12	14
610006 CAPTAIN MICHAEL	W02010	GOM	6	10
611243 ERICA LYNN	T02038	SAB	2	5
633432 KELLY ANN	S01093	FEC	7	10
682221 SEA HAWK	T02036	NED	14	25
697038 REBOUND	D04045	MAB	8	8
902659 NIGHT STAR II	P01133	GOM	11	16
902748 WHITEWATER II	D04047	SAB	5	15
904300 KIM NHI	J02069	GOM	9	15
905679 CAPT MIKE	X03004	GOM	10	15
908223 SHADY LADY	D04046	MAB	4	8
911431 CAPT DAVID	P01134	GOM	5	11
923317 SEA QUEEN	S01094	GOM	11	17
937416 KIM THANH PN	J02070	GOM	10	15
NC5126DC FINNALI	B05004	MAB	3	4
TOTAL			153	237

Table 2: Percent coverage (by hauls), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for October 1 to December 31, 2007 (A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	REQUIRED 8% COVERAGE	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS	
			A	D	U	A	D	A	D
			LB/LH/O						
GOM-2	73 (8.7%)	67	11/0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEC-3	7 (9.3%)	6	0/ 2/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	7 (6.2%)	9	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	52 (9.7%)	43	8/ 4/0	0	0	5	0	0	0
NEC-6	0 (0.0%)	5	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NED-7	14 (16.0%)	7	5/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OFFSHORE	0 (0.0%)	0	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOTAL	153 (8.6%)	143	24/6/0	0	0	5	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	62,770
FEC	3,564
SAB	4,240
MAB	52,382
NED	11,080
TOTAL	134,036

Table 3: Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during Quarter 4, 2007 (October 1 to December 31); short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
BIGEYE	628300	Reason 2, 4. Certified letter received. Vessel has been submitted to OLE for further action. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. Logbook submissions: Landings data show trips departing 10/3, 10/12, 10/28, 11/4, 11/16, 11/27, 12/11, 12/18.
BLUEFIN	597797	Reason 7. Certified letter sent to permit holder address, but permit holder had just sold vessel. Updated address for new permit holder could not be obtained. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/2, 10/16, 10/24, 11/10.
BJORN II	947927	Reason 5, 7. Certified letter received. Vessel made one trip early in selection period, but no observer was available. Vessel did not fish again during quarter. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trip departing on 10/21.

Table 3 (continued): Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during Quarter 4, 2007 (October 1 to December 31); short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
CANDACE	673556	Reason 3. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to indicate the vessel could not obtain safety decal because of lack of USCG examiner in Trinidad; however, owner offered another vessel in same area to take an observer; an observer was deployed on this vessel in early January, 2008. POP requested 8 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/7, 10/29.
CHARLESTON STAR	591301	Reason 1, 2 and 3. Certified letter received. Early in quarter, owner called to say that current configuration was a 4 man crew and 4 man life raft, but would call if that changed. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/7, 10/17.

Table 3 (continued): Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during Quarter 4, 2007 (October 1 to December 31); short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
CHRISTOPHER JOE	608436	Reason 3 and 5. Certified letter not received. Vessel finally obtained safety decal in December, but then had crew issues. Vessel is selected again for Quarter 1, 2008. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report, but the POP knows the vessel fished.
DAYTONA	507646	Reason 3. Certified letter received. Vessel has been submitted to OLE for further action. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/12, 10/17.
DESTINY	1031845	Reason 3. Certified letter received. Vessel communicated with POP but was not successful in obtaining a safety decal. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/15, 11/6, 11/16. Vessel was selected again for coverage in Quarter 1, 2008; and took an observer on January 25 th , 2008.

Table 3 (continued): Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during Quarter 4, 2007 (October 1 to December 31); short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1) No bunk available; (2) Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity; (3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4) No communication with observer office/staff; (5) Not fishing (involved in another fishery); (6) Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7) other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
LEROY TENNISHOE	938537	Reason 6. Certified letter received. Vessel under repairs for most of quarter. POP requested 9 sets for the quarter. No fishing reports submitted for November and December.
LINNEA C	665962	Reason 1 and 3. Certified letter received. Vessel owner called to inform POP that there was no room for an observer, and vessel never fishes with less than 5 total crew. However, Trip summary reports submitted by owner indicate vessel made 2 trips in Quarter with 4 total crew. POP requested 14 sets for the quarter. Landings data show trips departing 10/5, 10/20.
SARAH BETH	608322	Reason 4, 5. Certified letter received. No communications from owner. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.

Table 3 (continued): Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during Quarter 4, 2007 (October 1 to December 31); short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1) No bunk available; (2) Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity; (3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4) No communication with observer office/staff; (5) Not fishing (involved in another fishery); (6) Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7) other.

SEA ANGEL 926754

Reason 7. Certified letter not received. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.

SYLVIA JEAN 609788

Reason 6. Certified letter received. Owner called to report that owner had sunk. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. No landings reported.

Table 4: The POP coverage completed aboard the pelagic longline fleet by quarter and year since the publication of the 2004 Biological Opinion. The number of trips observed include vessels that are covered multiple times during a quarter. The number of unique vessels observed represents those vessels only covered at least once by an observer.

Quarter	Year	No. of Vessels Selected	No. of Trips Observed	No. of Unique Vessels Observed
3	2004	44	29	29
4	2004	30	28	14
1	2005	34	26	12
2	2005	45	22	9
3	2005	41	19	7
4	2005	28	14	1
1	2006	31	20	4
2	2006	33	23	2
3	2006	39	22	2
4	2006	24	17	1
1	2007	20	17	1
2	2007	65	43	4
3	2007	42	28	4
4	2007	29	20	1
Cumulative Totals			328	91
